How do we stop the violence in the North?

Thousands of people from all over Ireland have marched to demand an end to the killings in Northern Ireland. Since the Northern conflict began, over 3,000 people have been killed. Thousands more have been imprisoned.

Today Northern Ireland has the highest numbers of prisoners per head of the population in Europe. No wonder that ordinary working people are fed up with the conflict.

But the leaders of the peace movement which has emerged in the South are going in the wrong direction. They are directing their anger at the paramilitaries -- and not putting the finger of blame onto state violence.

❑ At the huge peace rally in Dublin, Margaret Carragher whose husband was shot by the British army was spat at.

❑ In the same week that the peace movement was building up, an inquest into the shooting of Aidan McAnespie cleared a British soldier of the crime because 'his wet fingers slipped on the trigger'. But there was no condemnation of this cover up.

In the British House of Commons, John Major congratulated those looking for peace. His words were completely hypocritical. His war planes and those of the US killed thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians to protect their oil profits.

There will never be any peace in Northern Ireland as long the violence British army and the RUC is covered over. It is their violence which has driven thousands of ordinary working people into the IRA.

RUC BANS PEACE MARCH:

The RUC banned a peace march in Belfast called by Relatives for Justice. The group, which represents families of those killed by security forces, had wanted to go to Belfast City hall to hold a vigil for all the 3,000 people killed in the North's troubles.

But the RUC told them that they could only march around the area of Divis St. The RUC were trying to foster division. As Anne Bradley, from Relatives for Justice, explained, the RUC decision "prevented Protestants from joining as it is in a Catholic area".

The only peace vigils the RUC want in Belfast city centre is one's that do not mention the killings by the British army and the RUC.

To stop the violence in the North today we need to do a number of things:

BUILD WORKERS UNITY

Northern Ireland is now a near apartheid zone. 90% of Catholics and Protestants live in areas where there is only one religion. The only place where Catholics and Protestants meet regularly is in the workplaces and the colleges. And it is here that unity must be forged.

Today the Tories are trying to destroy the lives of working people in Northern Ireland as they are in Britain. They want to privatise the hospitals, the electricity, the gas and even the water.

The Tories are hated by both Catholic and Protestant workers. Thousands of workers have already marched to defend their health service. Thousands more are getting ready to fight the Tories pay freeze.

When workers fight alongside each other they can get rid of the sectarianism that keeps them divided.

Already there have been small signs which show what is possible:

❑ When the UVF threatened Catholic bus drivers, there was a Belfast city wide stoppage to protest. We need to build on that unity.

DEMAND THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE BRITISH ARMY:

The British army said there were in Northern Ireland to keep the warring Irish apart and bring peace. After more than 20 years. it is obvious that this is a lie.

❑The British army have operated shoot to kill tactics. But only one soldier, Private Ian Tain was ever convicted and he is now back serving with his regiment.

❑ British army planners have played a major role in the re-design of Belfast. Estates have been sealed off from each. Areas have been cordoned off as 'Green' or 'Orange' to suit the generals.

❑The British army has been concentrated in Catholic working class areas. Their repression and harassment has driven thousands sot join the IRA.

Their presence only means that the violence will continue. They should be withdrawn.

FIGHT AGAINST BOTH IRISH STATES.

James Connolly said that the partition of Ireland would lead to a 'carnival of reaction'. He was right.

The SPUC bigots in the South are a mirror of the Orange bigots in the North. The Catholic morality that was enshrined in the South's law helped the Orange Order convince Protestant workers that they should look for a Protestant state. All the time the Orange and Green bosses robbed us. They may tell us today that they are proper Europeans and want to leave sectarianism behind. But their system bred the poison.

Sectarianism will be finally uprooted in Ireland only when there is a movement that fights both rotten states.

Workers unity against the cuts

UDA PLANS MORE ASSINATIONS:

"It's entirely a joke to say that someone who is killed in the heart of a republican area is innocent" says John Montgomery, the cover name for a spokesperson for the UDA.

The UDA is determined to whip up sectarian feelings by making anyone who lives in a nationalist area of the North their target.

One of the UDA victims was 17 year old Damian Walshe. According to his mother, "Damian was an innocent child. He was a typical case. All he wanted was to enjoy himself. He had no interest in politics."

The UDA can carry out its terror campaign because it has been re-armed with guns from South Africa. Recent revelations at the trial of Brian Nelson -- the British army informer inside the UDA --revealed that the British Army was aware that these guns were being imported and did nothing.

The UDA have also been supplied with highly accurate intelligence from inside the security forces. Their assassinations often take place just after the security forces have been withdrawn from an area.

As one eyewitness to one of their killings put it,

"The soldiers can tell me how many times I have gone to the school, the shop's , my sister's house. But they cannot see a carload of Loyalists drive up and fire off dozen's of shots"

Join Us!

If you would like to join the Socialist Workers Movement please fill in this slip and return it to Po Box 1648, James St. Dublin 8.

Name:.....

Address.....

.....Tel:.....

DEAD END POLITICS:

The IRA grew out of anger at the sectarianism of the Northern State.

Thousands had marched for civil rights -- but they were met with events like Bloody Sunday.

A minority turned to the IRA believing that the armed struggle was the best way to fight back. But recent events show that republican politics have come to a dead end.

❑The IRA's decision to place bombs on the streets of working class towns in both Britain and Northern Ireland has been a disaster.

A Tory government is not going to pull out of Northern Ireland because a shop is burnt or a three year old blown to pieces.

The Tories never give a damm about working class lives. The recession does them far more damage than a few IRA bombs.

❑Today thousands of ordinary nary Protestant workers are facing low wages and a life on the dole. They are angry and bitter against the system that has done this to them. But IRA bombings of Protestant towns like Bangor only makes it easier for the thugs of the UDA to gain support.

❑Republicans today call on Bill Clinton and the EC to intervene in Ireland to bring peace. They do not talk now about ending the system that breeds unemployment and poverty. That is why they offer nothing to those who live beyond the Catholic ghettoes of the North.

The struggle against sectarianism will not go forward as long as republican politics are to the fore.

That is why the North desperately needs a socialist organisation that offer an alternative to republicanism and the sell-out politics of the union leaders.

JOIN THE SWM:

The SWM organises across the sectarian divide. It stands up clearly for workers unity and a fight against oppression.

In the 1930s the Revolutionary Workers Groups pulled together workers from the Falls and the Shankil to fight back together against unemployment.

When the RUC attacked the Catholic areas, the Protestant areas rioted as well. The RWG showed that workers unity was not a distant dream.

The SWM stands in that fighting tradition. That is why it seeks members North and South of the border who want to overthrow sectarianism and the system that breeds it. Join us in the fight.